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VILLE FRANCHE - About 1859 - 1600 Linden Lane, Relay. This parcel was much larger at one time and contained an older house, possibly dating from 1845, shown as William Lowe's on Sidney's 1850 map, later as Mrs. [Susannah] Lowe's after she became a widow. The property was purchased in 1858 by James H. Lockett who lived nearby on the hilltop at Overton, a place he had purchased from Dr. Robert C. Dorsey in 1854.

A new "frame cottage" was added to the tax rolls in 1860, charged to Vivian Brent, husband of Anne Josephine Brent, who were not owners of the land. The cottage was assessed at \$3,000. This is possibly the Brent "Cottage Residence" listed in 1858 by Edmund G. Lind in his tabulation of architectural designs. In 1865 Lockett was sued by various mortgage holders, including the trustee of Mrs. Lowe's estate; testimony at that time mentioned "some interest claimed by the Brents," but the Brents renounced any ownership. The property was ordered sold and advertised in the Sun, August 15, 1865, as a "desirable Country seat . . . former home of Vivian Brent, Esq., and adjoining the property of James H. Lockett, Esq." The 36-acre parcel was within five minute's walk of the Relay House. The 1866 city directory (p. 260) listed Lockett as a "real estate broker" with an office at 30 St. Paul Street, his home in the county. The 1860 directory showed that Brent was a city attorney.

Thomas Pindell purchased the house at public auction following the case of Fairbanks-v. Lockett. The next owner was James McDonnell in 1872. 13th District . . . robbery on Catonsville Avenue or Rolling Road at home of James McDonnell . . . the "moonlight mechanics" cut through a shutter in parlor . . . also an attempt on home of Miss O'Hern . . . mentions large silver medal presented to Naval Constructor James McDonnell by Victor Emanuel, King of Italy . . . for gallantry in rescuing crew of Brigantine Delaide . . . in fire at Callao, Peru, on June 25, 1873 . . . --B.C. Union, May 16, 1874. The atlas patron list shows that McDonnell was a career naval officer. McDonnell advertised the house as a 12-room cottage named Ville Franche in the Sun of May 8, 1879. It was C. W. S. Banks' house in the 1915 Bromley atlas. It is a large house in frame, now covered with white aluminum siding; roughly cruciform in plan, two stories high. It survives on a large tract (Parcel P248). A postcard view of the house postmarked 1911 shows that the original design was Gothic Revival, with bargeboards, pendants, and finials. Owner: Mrs. Bertha A. Price.